

# Principles

*January 2004 Draft*



Seattle's  
Central  
Waterfront  
Plan

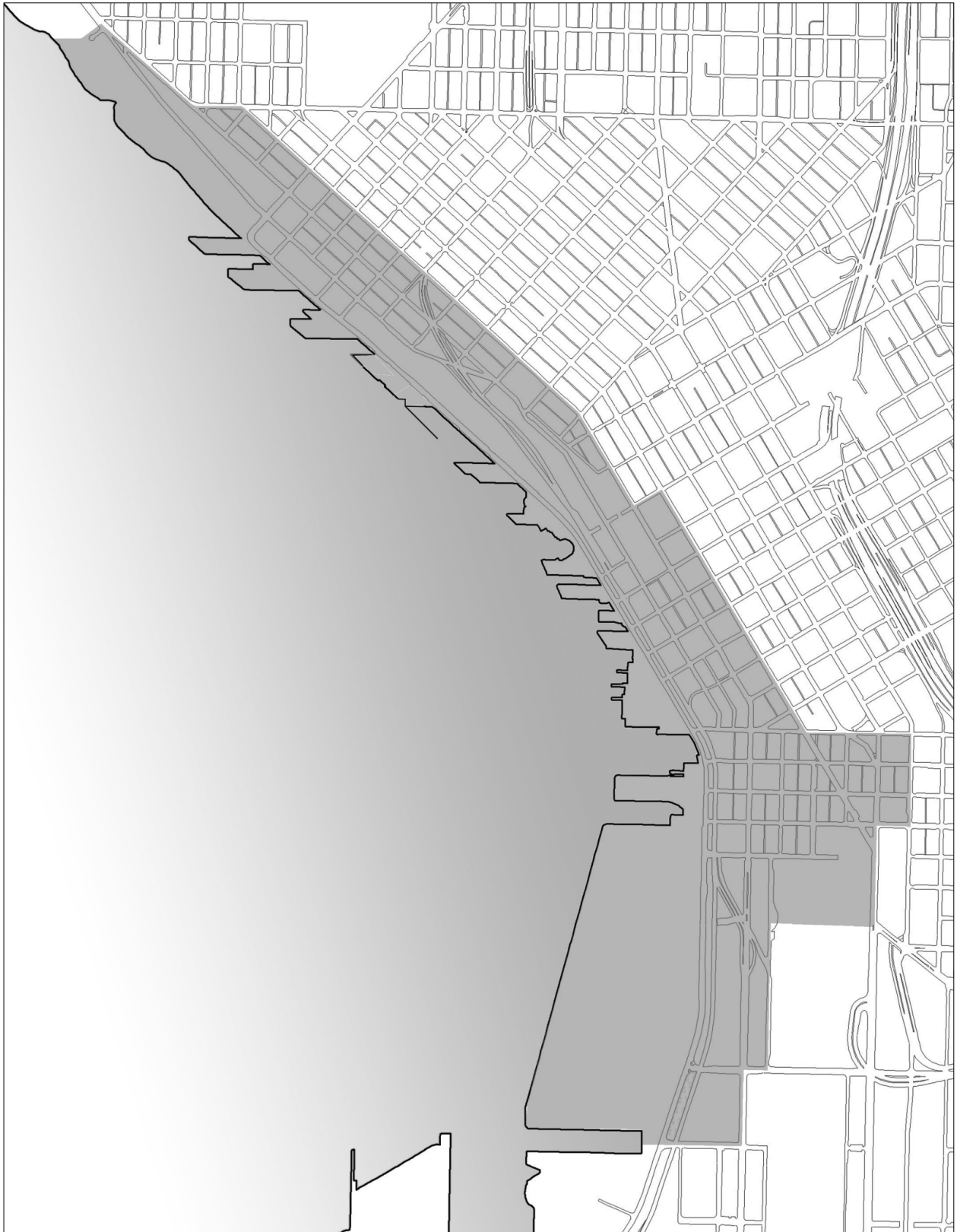
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city  
design



## Seattle's Central Waterfront Plan: Study Area



# Seattle's Central Waterfront Plan

## Principles

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# Introduction

The Planning Principles and Priorities presented in this document provide the preliminary framework for planning the Central Waterfront's future. They will also guide actions affecting the area before a final plan is adopted.

**Where they came from.** The content of the Principles and Priorities was drawn primarily from a base of plans and policies developed over the years to articulate the type of future Seattle citizens want for their waterfront. These statements are presented in the background report, "Current Plans, Policies, and Regulations" (December 2003), prepared by the Department of Planning and Development. City staff initially reviewed these existing policies, condensing and modifying them into statements addressing issues relevant to developing the Central Waterfront Plan. The principles reflect goals and policies from the City's Comprehensive Plan, various neighborhood plans, past waterfront plans, and recent work of public agencies and civic organizations dealing with waterfront issues, including the Design and Planning Commissions' review of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall replacement project, and input from numerous City Departments responsible for various waterfront projects and programs.

An initial draft of the document was presented at the first public forum sponsored jointly by the Design and Planning Commissions to kick off the waterfront planning effort in June, 2003. In September and October, 2003, the Department of Planning and Development sponsored technical discussion groups formed around five key issue areas that would be addressed in the waterfront plan:

- 1) transportation;
- 2) urban design, public space, historic preservation, arts and culture;
- 3) natural environment and ecology;
- 4) economic development, tourism and trade; and
- 5) neighborhood, community, housing, social services, and stewardship.

Each group was charged with reviewing and commenting on the Principles as they applied to their particular topic. Input from these discussions, interactive exercises conducted with participants of the first forum, and other sources influenced the content and structure of the subsequent draft, which was presented at a second forum in November, 2003. The version of the Principles and Priorities in this document reflects comments and additional input received at the November forum and afterwards.

**How they are to be used.** The Principles and Priorities were developed to serve two specific purposes early in the waterfront planning process.

- **Aid evaluation of Alaskan Way Viaduct/Seawall Project Alternatives.** First, and most immediately, the principles provide an expression of public policy to guide the selection of a preferred alternative for replacing the existing Viaduct structure, rebuilding the seawall, and reconfiguring surface streets in the area. A project of this magnitude will exert a major influence on the future development in the Central Waterfront, posing new opportunities and challenges. Currently, five alternatives are being reviewed by the City and State in an environmental impact statement,

and the Principles and Priorities will be used to evaluate the alternatives for consistency with the public's goals for the area's future.

- **Guide development of a Long-range Waterfront Action Plan.** The second purpose is to guide the City's development of a long-range plan for the Central Waterfront. While the Alaskan Way Viaduct project will have a significant impact on the Central Waterfront's future, the long-range plan will address a larger area and cover a broader scope of issues. The Principles will be used during the initial phases of developing the plan to influence the following products:

*Alternative Visions.* The process for developing the Central Waterfront plan allows the public to engage in preparing alternative visions exploring different futures for the area. To ensure consistency with the fundamental values expressed by Seattleites about their city's future, the Principles and Priorities will be used to establish the parameters for developing the alternative visions. The format for developing the alternative visions will be a "charrette" conducted in late February.

In addition to the Principles and Priorities, several "givens" have been identified about conditions in the Central Waterfront that the alternative visions need to acknowledge. These "givens" include projects known to be going forward, such as development of the Olympic Sculpture Park, conditions that reflect state or federal mandates, such as compliance with Endangered Species Act or state maritime navigation laws, or positions that would not be in the public interest to change, such as prohibitions on residential development over water.

*Concept Plan.* The completed alternative visions will be evaluated for consistency with the Principles and Priorities. Ideas that further public objectives for the area will be used to develop a "Concept Plan" that sketches out a preferred direction, in general terms, for the area's future. The Concept Plan—likely a composite of the best ideas from many individual alternative visions -- will then be released for broader public review, and, once approved by Council, will serve as the foundation for a more fully developed Long-range Waterfront Action Plan.

For the purposes described above, the Principles and Priorities themselves do not describe a specific vision for the Central Waterfront. Instead, they more broadly capture public values for the future of the area, regardless of the different paths future development might take. They provide a framework that is both flexible enough to accommodate multiple options for the future, but direct enough to identify conditions that must be addressed and essential qualities to be maintained or enhanced.

**Next Steps.** The Principles and Priorities will be used to review the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall project alternatives in the spring, and will guide development of alternative visions at the charrette in late February 2004. Later, they will be used to evaluate these alternative visions as the Concept Plan is developed over spring, 2004. Following the charrette in February, there will be a last opportunity to revise the Principles before the document is submitted to Council. Early in 2004, Council is expected to review the Planning Principles and Priorities and ultimately endorse a final version.

# Planning Principles

## Summary of Principles and Priorities

The following Principles reflect key values expressed by Seattleites over time about the Central Waterfront's future. They are not presented in order of priority. However, given the range of the public's hopes for this critical area, one overarching principle emerges—the need to balance and integrate the multiple legitimate purposes the area is expected to fulfill. This one principle overlaps with six other principles related to the key elements that will shape the character and function of the future waterfront.

- **Balance and Integration.** As an overarching principle, strike a workable balance for integrating nature, human activities, economic development, and transportation to create a functional, ecologically sound, and beautiful waterfront.
- **Access and Connection.** Make public use and access the primary objective for redeveloping the Central Waterfront. Increase physical and visual access to the shoreline and link the waterfront with inland areas so that each area reinforces the other and contributes to a cohesive Downtown.
- **Authenticity and Identity.** Keep the waterfront real by accommodating functions that serve local community needs and by maintaining connections with the area's past. Promote development that reinforces the uniqueness of place, reveals the dynamic nature of the shoreline, and reflects the spirit of the people of Seattle and the Puget Sound region.
- **Destination and Movement.** Improve the waterfront's accessibility as a destination for people while acknowledging its critical role as a transportation corridor to and through Downtown. Ensure that the multiple modes of transportation serving the waterfront are well integrated with each other and with the larger Downtown and regional transportation network.
- **Diversity and Flexibility.** Plan for the waterfront's future in a manner that recognizes the area's dynamic nature and the need to respond to conditions likely to change over time. Make the waterfront an exciting urban neighborhood and regional destination that accommodates multiple functions, including recreation and public gathering, working waterfront activity, a place for people to live and work, and habitat conservation.
- **Economic Development.** Promote a healthy economy and attract investment to the Puget Sound region by developing the area as a modern, urban, working waterfront and a major recreational and cultural amenity that serves as a symbol of the region's vitality and livability.
- **Environmental Sustainability.** Develop the waterfront as a model of environmental sustainability through redevelopment and public improvements that enhance marine habitat and migration, improve water and air quality, and reduce noise.

Each of these principles is expanded upon in this document to include priority statements that identify actions for achieving it. To provide additional clarity and support, some priority statements are also accompanied by related “ideas and themes” identified during public review of earlier drafts of the Principles.

The Principles and Priorities are followed by a list of “Givens” – those conditions that are not likely to change or actions that have already been committed to. A list of “Conflicts” is also identified—inconsistencies among objectives that have surfaced and will need to be resolved in the course of this planning process.



## Principle **Balance and Integration**

*As an overarching principle, strike a workable balance for integrating nature, human activities, economic development, and transportation to create a functional, ecologically sound, and beautiful waterfront.*

The Central Waterfront is Seattle's front porch and greatest amenity. It is both a local and regional resource. With its spectacular, commanding views of Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains, the waterfront is a dynamic intersection of natural beauty, urban charm, and economic activity. Because of its attractive qualities and strategic importance, it is a magnet for multiple uses and serves multiple purposes. Accommodating and integrating these competing goals will require a careful balancing act.

### Priorities

#### **1. Balance the functions and mix of uses accommodated in the Central Waterfront area to meet a broad range of public needs and benefits.**

Related ideas and themes:

- Balance inspired visions for the area's future with a firm grounding in economic realities.
- Balance the area's historic function as a transportation hub and corridor with its emerging function as an urban neighborhood and public amenity destination.
- Balance the amount of public space provided with the need for sufficient activity to enliven such spaces; balance active places with quiet, reflective places.
- Balance tourist activities with activities meeting the needs of the local population.
- Balance accommodating human activity with the need to provide responsible stewardship for the natural environment. Weigh the economic benefits of future waterfront activity against environmental costs.

#### **2. Recognize the inherent sense of apartness – resulting from the natural and reconstructed terrain, historical function, and development pattern – that characterizes the Central Waterfront. Balance efforts to integrate the area with its surrounding with efforts to retain the sense of a unique and separate place.**

#### **3. Balance achieving cohesive design for the whole Central Waterfront area with expressing the special design character of individual districts within the area; encourage innovative design while respecting the area's special context and past design traditions to gracefully integrate the new with the old.**

#### **4. Balance the need to be adaptable to changing conditions and demands with the need to impart a sense of permanence, especially for such features as the seawall and significant open spaces.**

#### **5. Ensure that future development of the Central Waterfront is compatible and integrated with neighboring Elliott Bay shoreline areas.**

## Principle **Access and Connection**

*Make public use and access the primary objective for redeveloping the Central Waterfront. Increase physical and visual access to the shoreline and link the waterfront with inland areas so that each area reinforces the other and contributes to a cohesive Downtown.*

Access means making the Central Waterfront available to all people: residents, tourists, families and workers of all ages, incomes, social groups and physical abilities. Public access includes both physical access – the ability to reach the edge of the water on foot – and visual access – the ability to see the water and views across Elliott Bay from within and outside the waterfront area.

The Central Waterfront has historically been the city's gateway for regional waterborne passenger travel. While this role has contributed to the area's unique identity, it has also contributed to its isolation from the rest of Downtown Seattle, as transportation facilities – namely, the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the railroad mainline – have obstructed shoreline access. A steep bluff and waterfront industrial uses have also reinforced the separation of the waterfront from the rest of Downtown.

In recent years, efforts have been made to increase public use of the waterfront and improve access to the shoreline, including regulations aimed at creating and protecting public view corridors. The replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct now presents new opportunities for greater public access, both physical and visual.

## Priorities

### **1. Weave the waterfront and upland areas together through an intricate network of connections that provide a variety of quality experiences for pedestrians.**

#### Related ideas and themes:

- Improve pedestrian connections—especially east-west connections—between the waterfront and the rest of the Center City.
- Prioritize routes to improve as key connections to major waterfront destinations and access points, such as the ferry terminal, while also improving minor connectors to increase choices for pedestrian movement. Actions related to existing key connections include:
  - Reinforce the Pike Hillclimb as a highly visible, key pedestrian link between the Pike Place Market and the Downtown waterfront.
  - Extend the University Street pedestrian connection from the Harbor Steps across Western Avenue to reinforce the link between the waterfront, the Seattle Art Museum and Benaroya Hall, and the convention center/Freeway Park.
- Consider the use of such assists as stairs, elevators, funiculars, and improved sidewalks, as needed, to facilitate pedestrian movement between the waterfront and upland areas.
- Treat each pedestrian connection as a unique feature reflecting the special qualities of the area it traverses.

- Improve walking routes to Lake Union, Pioneer Square/International District, Uptown Queen Anne and Capitol Hill/First Hill.

**2. Extend the reach of the waterfront, in terms of visual access and physical connection, as far inland as possible.**

Related ideas and themes:

- Maintain water views from Downtown streets and provide public view corridors to strengthen visual access.
- Align views, physical connections, and landmarks to draw people to the waterfront and orient them within the area.

**3. Use open space to enhance visual and physical access to the shoreline, and site open space at locations where strong physical and visual connections to the water can be provided.**

Related ideas and themes:

- Increase shoreline frontage dedicated to public recreation and open space and seek to provide a continuous pedestrian promenade along the shoreline edge.
- Provide quality open spaces that are sufficient in size and strategically located in relation to significant view corridors and pedestrian connections to attract public use.
- Provide opportunities for people to touch the water.

## Principle **Authenticity and Identity**

*Keep the waterfront real by accommodating functions that serve local community needs and by maintaining connections with the area's past. Promote development that reinforces the uniqueness of place, reveals the dynamic nature of the shoreline, and reflects the spirit of the people of Seattle and the Puget Sound region.*

The Central Waterfront is one of Seattle's most striking locations; a unique two mile stretch among the 65 miles of shoreline bounding the city. It is the site of an ancient Native American settlement and the city's birthplace. In the course of the city's history, parts of the area have been rebuilt several times. With its current collection of piers, piersheds and old warehouse structures, the waterfront possesses a distinctive urban form and development pattern reflecting past functions. The Alaskan Way Viaduct and the Port of Seattle's container cargo cranes are more recent additions to the waterfront that have also become prominent features in the cityscape.

The Downtown waterfront is an "edge" environment, a transition between land and water. Here, the crowded city meets the open expanse of Elliott Bay – a dramatic contrast of urban activity and wild aquatic habitat, a place of movement in and out and through the city. It is a place of transition – between the modestly scaled, fine grained shoreline development from a century ago and the modern, highrise Downtown core; and between the flat shoreline and surface of the bay that accommodate movement and the inland bluffs and steep slopes that restrict movement. The future waterfront will need to express these unique qualities and relationships in a new way, while recalling elements of the past.

## Priorities

- 1. Achieve an authentic urban waterfront unique to Seattle through uses and development that are strongly associated or highly compatible with a modern working waterfront environment, the natural ecology and cultural history of the area, and desired conditions in adjacent, high density neighborhoods.**

### Related ideas and themes:

- Encourage functions that serve real needs of the local community, recognizing that uses and activities that draw locals will also appeal to tourists (e.g., the Pike Place Market).
- Avoid over planning the area and developing an artificial, "Disney-fied" caricature of a real waterfront. Allow for spontaneity and messiness.
- Maintain the presence of waterborne passenger travel on the Central Waterfront as a viable working waterfront use consistent with the desire for increased public access and activity in the area.

**2. Emphasize the unique qualities and functions of the waterfront environment to develop a strong sense of identity and place.**Related ideas and themes:

- Capitalize on views as a component of the waterfront's unique identity; enhance the waterfront experience by coordinating views with development to provide orientation and drama.
  - Use views to heighten the sense of the natural environment and emphasize the presence of water and immediacy of Elliott Bay.
  - Shape development so that the topography and development character of upland areas are visually apparent; allow visual penetration into upland areas from the water to reveal the depth of the Downtown skyline and the presence of surrounding landforms.
- Create new landmarks to strengthen the area's identity and introduce architectural interest to the waterfront, especially through the design of features that express its role as a gateway.
- Express a more harmonious relationship between the built and natural waterfront environments as part of the area's identity; design the built environment to positively and visibly respond to conditions of the natural environment.
- Establish a memorable public realm by reflecting the unique characteristics of the area and emphasizing places of special significance in the design and siting of public facilities, rights-of-way, and open spaces.
- Encourage interpretive exhibits that educate the public about the area's natural characteristics and history, to enhance the area's function as a living, outdoor museum.
- Honor and build upon the area's cultural history and historic development pattern to provide a sense of continuity with the past, as well as a link to the future.
  - Preserve, restore and re-use built resources of cultural, architectural, or social significance, and design new waterfront features that are respectful of these resources so that the area adapts to change gracefully.
  - Recognize the pier structures as historic resources of national value and an important component of the area's development pattern. Designate as landmarks any structures (such as piers) or architectural or landscape elements warranting preservation that are not currently protected.
  - Pursue opportunities to reflect the Native American heritage of the waterfront, including treatment of archeologically significant sites.

**3. Enhance conditions unique to the waterfront experience that feed our innate connection to place.**Related ideas and themes:

- Provide opportunities for sensory experience of the waterfront, recognizing that the sights, sounds and smell of the waterfront environment are critical to its special identity and attraction to people.
- Minimize noise levels to enhance the waterfront experience by allowing the sound of water, marine activity and marine birds to be more strongly perceived.
- Reinforce connection to place through public art and the use of site-specific environmental art and sculpture.
- Make visible the passage of time, tides, seasons, and ages.

## Principle **Destination and Movement**

*Improve the waterfront's accessibility as a destination for people while acknowledging its critical role as a transportation corridor to and through Downtown. Ensure that the multiple modes of transportation serving the waterfront are well integrated with each other and with the larger Downtown and regional transportation network.*

The Central Waterfront has always been, and will continue to be, a place of arrival and departure as well as a path through the densest part of the city. The area accommodates the movement of both people and goods via a wide range of transportation modes. At the same time, the Central Waterfront is a vibrant attraction for Seattle residents and tourists alike. With the replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct, there is an opportunity to maintain an important component of the regional transportation network while strengthening the waterfront as a pedestrian-oriented destination.

### Priorities

1. **Provide and link multiple modes of transportation serving the waterfront, giving priority to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access, service access for waterfront uses, freight and goods through movement, and automobile access for customers of waterfront businesses.**

2. **Balance through-movement, Downtown access, and local access to meet the needs of different users.**

Related ideas and themes:

- Consider the waterfront's transportation function as a through traffic corridor in the broader context of the variety of transportation modes and corridors providing access to and through Downtown.
- Accommodate through-traffic on appropriate routes, with priority for freight and goods movement and transit, without increasing overall capacity for automobile commute trips to and through Downtown.

3. **Design transportation facilities to reinforce waterfront development objectives for increasing public use and access and creating a pedestrian and bicycle oriented destination.**

Related ideas and themes:

- Design facilities to be functionally and aesthetically harmonious with a pedestrian and bicycle oriented waterfront.
- Ensure that transportation facilities accommodate greater pedestrian and visual access to the water.
- Design circulation systems to be easily understood and to enhance a sense of structure and orientation for travelers in the waterfront area.
- Use the Viaduct replacement project as an opportunity to create new sites to accommodate new uses and public amenities in the area.

- To accommodate a preferred scheme for replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct, increased traffic volumes on the Alaskan Way surface street shall be accommodated as long as a high quality, pedestrian friendly environment can be maintained.

**4. Examine new opportunities to modify existing transit service or provide new service to better integrate the Central Waterfront with the Downtown and regional transit network.**

Related ideas and themes:

- Link transit service with major pedestrian destinations, such as the ferry terminal.
- Provide pedestrian connections to the planned monorail stations along the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue alignment and light rail stations in the transit tunnel.
- Improve the convenience and utility of the Waterfront Streetcar to enhance local transit circulation and consider potential extensions and/or alignment alternatives to improve connectivity and increase ridership.

**5. Facilitate walking and cycling to and throughout the waterfront area.**

Related ideas and themes:

- Create high-quality, human-scale streetscape amenities for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Make all street crossings – especially east-west street crossings – safe and easy for pedestrians.
- Provide bicycle facilities to accommodate commute trips to and through the area and more leisurely recreational trips.

**6. Address traffic circulation to enhance conditions in the evolving, high density residential area along the western edge of Belltown.**

**7. Provide an adequate supply of short-term customer parking serving waterfront businesses to sustain the economic health and viability of the area.**

**8. Maintain a multi-modal hub on the Central Waterfront for cross-Sound commuting that is well integrated with the pedestrian and transit network, increases access to the shoreline for the general public, and provides a public gathering place and landmark destination with a mix of uses that will contribute to the high level of activity desired in the area.**

## Principle **Diversity and Flexibility**

*Plan for the waterfront's future in a manner that recognizes the area's dynamic nature and the need to respond to conditions likely to change over time. Make the waterfront an exciting urban neighborhood and regional destination that accommodates multiple functions, including recreation and public gathering, working waterfront activity, a place for people to live and work, and habitat conservation.*

The Downtown waterfront is a dynamic environment. It accommodates multiple functions and supports a variety of activities that have changed over time and will continue to evolve in the future. Some of these activities are unique to this location, while others overlap with functions in adjacent areas.

The shoreline area accommodates waterborne transportation facilities – including cargo, ferry, and cruise ship terminals; tourist and commercial activity occupying historic pier structures; and public open space and recreation facilities. Inland areas broaden the mix to include housing, office, hotel, and retail activity, with the Pike Place Market and Pioneer Square serving as major attractions. While some uses appear to be stable, others are in transition. Cargo handling is likely to continue to withdraw from the area, while recent projects have increased the presence of public uses and open space. Housing along the area's eastern edge is a growing addition to the mix of uses. This diversity of activities will help ensure the area's vitality and economic sustainability.

## Priorities

### **1. Promote diversity and complexity in the variety of districts, mix of uses, scale and intensity of development and design of the physical environment.**

#### Related ideas and themes:

- Recognize the many distinctive "places" that make up the waterfront, and highlight the special characteristics of each.
- Encourage heterogeneity – variety of activities, uses and people – and sparkle – activity, vitality, funkiness and spontaneity.
- Strengthen existing healthy districts; reinforce clusters of uses that benefit from their proximity and contribute to diversity and the critical mass needed to generate desired levels of activity.
- Extend the vitality and character of adjacent neighborhoods to the waterfront, while also reinforcing the presence of the waterfront in these areas.

### **2. Promote activities that make the waterfront an exciting place to be and support the primary objective of increasing public use and access.**

#### Related ideas and themes:

- Encourage a rich layering of activities that energize and sustain the waterfront year around.



- Create public places for bringing people together.
  - Develop more non-commercial civic uses on the waterfront, taking advantage of the fact that the vast majority of waterfront land is publicly owned.
  - Encourage water-dependent uses that bring people to the waterfront and increase public access.
  - Discourage new uses along the shoreline that conflict with public access or lack an orientation to the water, including water-dependent uses that are incompatible with the high level of public access desired.
- 3. Recognize and reinforce the Central Waterfront's dual characters – one being a singular, linear waterfront corridor, and the other being a collection of smaller, destination areas along the corridor.**
- 4. Create conditions that contribute to a safe and civil urban environment.**
- Related ideas and themes:
- Maintain streets and open spaces as active, well designed public spaces.
  - Support 24-hour activity in a manner that minimizes conflicts among different uses.
  - Improve the economic climate in areas now perceived as unsafe.
  - Accommodate a mix of people from all income, age, and social groups.
  - Provide for human services within the limits of what the area can support.
  - Ensure that new development protects occupants from adverse conditions of noise and other impacts associated with an active, diverse working waterfront environment.
  - Encourage the use of public service personnel to increase the feeling of safety.
- 5. Design major infrastructure improvements, including transportation facilities, to maximize flexibility and provide options for accommodating changing uses and demands in the area over time.**
- 6. Develop a plan for the waterfront's future that can both be implemented and remain adaptable to changing circumstances and needs.**

## Principle

## Economic Development

*Promote a healthy economy and attract investment to the Puget Sound region by developing both a modern, urban, working waterfront and major cultural amenity that serves as a symbol of the region's vitality and livability*

During Seattle's early history, the Central Waterfront was the city's economic lifeblood; the rise and fall of the region's fortunes were tied to the activities conducted there. Over time, the area's historic function as a port for waterborne goods shipment has diminished substantially, and activities related to the fishing industry have essentially disappeared. Because other locations are better suited to accommodating the present and future requirements of these functions, once they are gone, there are not likely to return.

Today, as a regional transportation corridor and waterborne passenger hub, major tourist destination recreation and cultural resource, and business community, the Central Waterfront continues to have an impact on the local and regional economy. Major changes to any of these functions would likely have significant economic impacts. The Central Waterfront's unique character and functions provide a special opportunity to leverage change to generate economic benefits for the larger region.

## Priorities

- 1. Continue to accommodate those transportation functions critical to the region's economic vitality.**
- 2. Promote diversity in the activities occurring on the Central Waterfront to sustain the area through economic cycles.**

Related ideas and themes:

- Maintain a working waterfront, recognizing its contemporary manifestation in 21<sup>st</sup> century Seattle.
- Attract and retain businesses and industries that provide livable-wage jobs and attract emerging high technology industries to the Puget Sound area through Central Waterfront development.

- 3. Plan and phase Central Waterfront development in a manner that reflects funding, partnership and revenue opportunities and results in financially affordable and sustainable development.**

Related ideas and themes:

- Take a long-term, holistic view in assessing the costs and benefits of public investments in the area. Maximize reinvestment opportunities in targeted areas through major public improvements, including the Viaduct replacement.

- Promote collaboration between private development and public agencies, including the State of Washington and Port of Seattle, to achieve economic development objectives for the Central Waterfront.
  - Capitalize on development opportunities that may result from improvements like the replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct to attract employment growth and investment in the area.
- 4. Revitalize development currently blighted by the Viaduct and create an active, urban edge east of Alaskan Way that is oriented to the waterfront.**
  - 5. Recognize the economic benefits derived from tourism and continue to support those activities that enliven the area, support waterborne passenger travel as a working waterfront use, and provide amenities also enjoyed by the local population.**

## Principle **Environmental Sustainability**

*Develop the waterfront as a model of environmental sustainability through redevelopment and public improvements that enhance marine habitat and migration, improve water and air quality, and reduce noise.*

Efforts by Seattle's early settlers to adapt the shoreline environment to the needs of the pioneer city dramatically altered natural conditions. Hilltops were regraded and tidelands filled, reshaping the shoreline to accommodate the functions of a bustling port and industrial center. At a time when most of the region was wilderness and natural resources plentiful, there was little regard for the environmental consequences of these actions.

Today, addressing the changing functions of the Downtown waterfront at a time of increased environmental awareness and concern provides the opportunity to rectify some of the environmental damage of these past actions and to promote a more ecologically sound environment in the future.

### **Priorities**

#### **1. Pursue opportunities through redevelopment and public improvement projects to enhance water and air quality and reduce noise.**

Related ideas and themes:

- Over time, achieve healthy conditions for swimming and fishing in the bay, with uninterrupted fish passage along the Elliott Bay shoreline.
- Encourage new technologies for waterfront operations that diminish environmental impacts as older uses are replaced.
- Reduce and eventually eliminate contaminated stormwater run-off and combined sewer overflows into Elliott Bay.
- Eliminate contaminated sediments in Elliott Bay, or, in areas around the piers, eliminate the effect of contaminated sediments through capping.
- Contribute to improved air quality and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by increasing the use of public transportation, walking, and bicycling, and decreasing emissions associated with motor vehicles along and near the waterfront.
- Wherever possible, use environmentally responsible products such as reused or recycled-content products, non-toxic materials, permeable surfaces, energy- and water-efficient products and technologies.
- Improve transportation facilities to reduce noise levels in the area.

**2. Pursue opportunities for shoreline rehabilitation and enhancement to improve habitat conditions and enhance migratory fish routes and feeding areas, while recognizing the urban character of the Downtown waterfront.**

Related ideas and themes:

- Proactively seek out opportunities to restore high-quality, natural-like habitat such as beaches, shallow-water habitat, and fine-grain sediment habitat.
- Create diverse quality habitat accommodating nesting, resting, and migration habitat areas to benefit different nearshore species.
- Over time, create feeding, nesting and resting habitat for nearshore species at appropriate locations around the Elliott bay shoreline.
- Over the long term, seek to reduce the amount of over-water coverage, including nearshore moorings. Where over-water coverage remains or occurs in the future, take measures to improve conditions for aquatic life and water quality, including the following:
  - Reduce or eliminate parking on piers over time.
  - Minimize or eliminate the use of treated wood in structures overwater.
  - Increase access to light in areas beneath pier structures.
- Unless related to shoreline rehabilitation, do not create additional dry land through fill.

**3. Design the seawall and abutting areas to increase opportunities for human contact with the water, enhance marine habitat and migration, and ensure the protection of property and public rights-of-way.**

Related ideas and themes:

- Achieve uninterrupted fish passage along the newly renovated seawall, using artificial structures, if necessary.
- Create opportunities for people to touch the water and access the water directly.
- Incorporate landscaping that enhances quality habitat for migrating juvenile salmon by providing shelter and a source of food.

**4. Promote upland conditions that will enhance the nearshore water environment, including improvements that minimize run-off and reduce impermeable surfaces.**

Related ideas and themes:

- Practice salmon-friendly, drought-tolerant and pesticide- and fertilizer-free landscaping, e.g., use only native vegetation in new plantings.
- Provide guidance for the design and construction of buildings and infrastructure through requirements and guidelines to promote sustainable development.
- Increase the use of innovative stormwater management technologies, such as rainwater collection and reuse, natural systems drainage, and green roofs.

# The Givens

## Transportation

- **Viaduct Replacement.** The existing Alaskan Way Viaduct will be replaced and a State route will continue to be accommodated along the waterfront. Those replacement alternatives that call for eliminating the elevated structure will open up new water views and will create opportunities for improved east-west connections to the waterfront.
- **Transportation Corridor.** The Central Waterfront area will continue to provide for the movement of goods and people, including:
  - connecting water-based and land-based transportation, especially ferry traffic and the regional road network;
  - north-south freight movement and the designated oversized vehicle route through Downtown;
  - circulation and access for local businesses, residents, and public uses;
  - access to Downtown; and
  - commuter and freight rail traffic on the mainline of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad north of the train tunnel, which will likely increase over time.
- **Ferry Terminal.** The Central Waterfront will continue to accommodate commuter ferry operations at a multi-modal hub location on the Central Waterfront. The existing Colman Dock location for the Washington State Ferry operations is regarded as the best choice for this function because it satisfies the following conditions:
  - provides convenient pedestrian connections to the Downtown office core for walk-on passengers;
  - maintains one of the few remaining water dependent uses on the Central Waterfront;
  - avoids conflicts between ferry traffic and cruise ship activity and other marine traffic;
  - provides access to regional thoroughfares (SR 99 and I-5) that will not generate additional negative impacts on the waterfront or Downtown neighborhoods;
  - off-terminal holding areas available that will not generate additional negative impacts on the waterfront or Downtown neighborhoods;
  - potential to minimize conflicts with pedestrian scale and character;
  - accommodates coordination with multiple land-based modes of transportation, to provide seamless connections for passengers arriving by foot, bicycle, or transit; and
  - Allows for coordination with future passenger only service provided by other operators.

Other potential locations for this function must meet or exceed these conditions to be considered.
- **New Passenger Ferry Services.** The state of Washington is discontinuing passenger ferry services. The nature of cross-Sound commuting will likely change with new, private service providers, terminal locations, advanced vessel technologies and a different mix of passenger only and car ferries.

- **Multi-Modal Transit.** The various transportation modes serving the Downtown waterfront – including waterborne transportation, transit, autos, trucks, pedestrians and bicyclists – will be integrated in a safe, efficient and aesthetically pleasing manner.
- **Monorail.** The monorail alignment on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue will provide new opportunities for access to the waterfront but will encroach on views of the water.
- **Marine Navigation.** Conditions required for marine navigation consistent with State and federal regulations shall be retained.
- **New Pedestrian Connections.** A pedestrian overpass will be provided at Thomas Street to connect Uptown Queen Anne with Myrtle Edwards Park. New, grade-separated pedestrian connections will link the Sculpture Park area with the waterfront.

## Environment

- **Nearshore Ecosystem.** Conditions on the Central Waterfront in the future will provide diverse habitat and improved water and sediment quality for wildlife, fish, and human health and enjoyment.
- **Clean Stormwater.** Redevelopment of the Central Waterfront, including upland areas, will provide opportunities for retaining and cleaning stormwater.
- **Geologic Constraints.** Development in the waterfront area will continue to be constrained due to soil, water table, and seismic conditions.
- **Environmental Constraints.** Redevelopment the waterfront area will need to ensure that new contamination does not occur in Elliott Bay and the adjacent upland area.
- **Natural Elements.** The natural phenomena of marine climate, currents, wind, rain and tides will continue to influence conditions on the Central Waterfront and shoreline, requiring practical design responses to these conditions.
- **Topography.** Topographic conditions will continue to affect the relationship between shoreline and inland areas, define area boundaries, and influence circulation patterns.

## Preservation and Cultural Resources

- **Landmarks and Landmark Districts.** Designated historic landmarks will continue to be preserved, providing a physical connection to the waterfront's past. The established boundaries of the Pioneer Square Preservation District and the Pike Market Historical District shall remain unchanged.
- **Historic Piers.** Many of the piers that established the physical form and character of Seattle's waterfront a century ago remain today largely because the functions that these structures originally accommodated abandoned the area, while regulatory constraints and lack of demand for new uses discouraged replacement. Not only

do these structures provide a physical connection to the area's past, but they lend a unique character to Downtown Seattle. Much of the pier development is temporary by nature, as the use of timber in a harsh marine environment sets a limit on the expected lifespan of pier structures. The maintenance implications raise issues about their permanence as waterfront features. Still, the pier structures remain as an important elements of Seattle's waterfront. Preservation of piers should maintain historic elements of the structures while allowing for improvements that make them more economically and environmentally sound.

- **Olympic Sculpture Park.** Development of the Olympic Sculpture Park (over 7 acres) will establish a major public open space that will improve shoreline access and attract more people to the north end of the Downtown waterfront. Pedestrian access to the waterfront will be improved with a grade separated connection to Myrtle Edwards Park over Elliott Avenue and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad.
- **Aquarium.** Future expansion of the Aquarium around Pier 59 will increase the amount of waterfront area dedicated to public use.

## Land Use and Development

- **Terminal 46.** In the long term, the current uses of Terminal 46 (88 acres) and some underutilized industrial sites to the east are likely to change, with more intensive redevelopment likely on the sites in the next 100 years. The current tenant of Terminal 46, Hanjin, has an option to lease the site until 2015. If the site is redeveloped after this time, it will create opportunities for environmental as well as economic enhancement.
- **Inland Development.** Inland portions of Downtown will continue to be more intensely developed, and additional land may become available or more attractive for redevelopment as a result of replacing the Viaduct.
- **Shoreline Development.** The overarching objectives of the Seattle Shoreline Master Program regarding public access, views, priority for water dependent uses, and environmental enhancement will continue to guide shoreline development.
- **Shoreline Edge.** To protect public and private property, the existing shoreline edge shall generally be maintained along the existing seawall alignment from Washington Street to the north. However, new designs for the waterfront may include some new shoreline features, especially at locations where conditions are particularly conducive to shoreline rehabilitation that can enhance habitat and public access to the water. Locations providing the best opportunities for shoreline rehabilitation include:
  - 1) shallow water areas (depths of 20 feet or less) away from existing piers; and
  - 2) inland areas where the distance between the water's edge and the public right-of-way is great enough to allow shallow extensions of water inland.



- **View Corridors.** Designated Downtown view corridors will be maintained and enhanced to strengthen visual access to Elliott Bay and beyond.
- **Harbor Lines.** State law to protect marine navigation will constrain actions beyond the currently established harbor lines.
- **Prohibited Uses.**
  - *Heliports and seaplane terminals.* Existing prohibitions on heliports and seaplane terminals will be retained because of the negative noise impacts and limited public benefit of these facilities at this location.
  - *Housing.* City and shoreline regulations will continue to prohibit housing over water.
  - *Container terminals and cargo handling.* Existing prohibitions on container terminals and cargo handling in the Urban Harborfront shoreline environment (area north of Terminal 46) will be maintained.

## Public Safety

- **Fire.** Fire protection capacity on the waterfront (land based as well as marine based operational capabilities) will need to be maintained.
- **Security.** Heightened security concerns could have implications on the potential for public access at certain shoreline facilities, such as cruise ship terminals, port facilities, and other marine transportation.

## Conflicts Identified to Date

- Continuous public access at the water's edge **versus** industrial maritime uses at water's edge, especially in the south waterfront.
- Public access to the waterfront **versus** heightened security at certain shoreline facilities, such as cruise ship terminals, port facilities and other marine transportation facilities.
- The large scale of streetscapes (i.e., multiple, wide traffic lanes, wide intersections, broad corner turning radii) necessary to accommodate vehicle-related uses (such as ferry operations and cruise ship support) **versus** the human-scale streetscapes necessary to accommodate a healthy, pleasant pedestrian environment.
- The desire for a destination that is a pedestrian oriented front porch to the city **versus** the need to accommodate a thoroughfare that serves freight and other vehicles passing through the waterfront area.
- The economic benefit of cruise ships for the tourism industry **versus** the negative environmental impacts (pollution and preventing sunlight from reaching the water for salmonid habitat), negative urban design impacts (obstructing views) and negative traffic and pedestrian impacts (necessity to have more and wider traffic lanes to serve tour busses on the waterfront).
- The aesthetic value and unique historic quality of the piers and pier sheds **versus** negative environmental impacts (pollution caused by treated wood and preventing sunlight from reaching the water for salmonid habitat) and the economic impacts (cost of maintaining the piers).
- The economic expediency of rebuilding the seawall in its current form and location **versus** the desire to vary the form and design of the seawall in order to improve habitat.
- The desire to establish a fixed range of land uses and public spaces **versus** the likelihood that uses and structures will constantly change over time with market conditions and economic forces.
- The economic benefit and interest in accommodating a range of land uses on the waterfront **versus** the belief that only water-dependent uses should be allowed on the shoreline, or else land should be devoted to habitat improvement.
- The interest in preserving authentic, unique characteristics of Seattle's waterfront **versus** flexibility and allowing for the waterfront to change over time.
- The economic benefit of having Terminal 46 remain in marine industrial use **versus** the desire to redevelop Terminal 46 as a mixed-use enclave.
- The emphasis on enhancing the urban character of the waterfront **versus** recreating a more naturalistic shoreline area.